[12] to present anything we have not thoroughly investigated. We have not stepped outside the geographic limits set forth except for a few incidental remarks. Although the cultural uniformity of the Nkundó-Mongo is remarkable it is not, of course, absolute. And if we have used the title Mariage des Nkundó (Marriage among the Nkundo), we have done so because it was difficult to find one which would be more appropriate for the geographic and ethnic limits of [14] this study. It is very likely that in most cases our data are valid beyond the limits we have laid out, but to generalize upon it before making a thorough study of each group would be contrary to all scientific method. The reader is therefore earnestly requested to take these remarks into account and to abstain from giving our conclusions too broad a scope.

Familial institutions in themselves and in their totality are outside the scope of this book. But since they are based on marriage, they have an important place within our framework. We must necessarily touch upon them, but we will limit our excursions into that realm to what is required to make the general description intelligible. On the other hand, the study of marriage throws a good deal of light on familial institutions.

The words "family," "clan," "group," etc., occur frequently. [13] The family is an entity smaller than the clan, and the latter is subordinate to the group. Since it is very difficult to give a precise definition, however, we have taken the trouble to make a clear distinction only when necessary. (1) [Editor's Note: Elsewhere we use

1. See Chapter V, Article III.

them more as generic terms or even as synonyms. In order to make family relationships and the expressions used by the Nkundó to designate them more comprehensible, we are attaching an example of a genealogical table.]

[13] I know of the following previous studies on the same subject:

Engels, "Les Wangata," Revue Congolaise, 1910, which also deals with marriage.

G. Kapteijn, "Familieleven en -zeden bij de Inboorlingen van den Evenaar," Congo, 1922, Vol. I, p. 532. [15] This study covers

In general one may assume that local groups will postulate only that kind of kinship relationship which does not necessitate a substantial functional reintegration. For this reason, units above the exogamy limit will easily tend to construe a genealogy which "proves" a kinship relationship. Groups of that type are functionally weak. One can observe processes of this kind both among the group of the Bekonda and among the neighboring E-group, Loyoyonga. The institution of the oldest (see above, p. 14) also appears to have a leveling influence. The privileges of the oldest (and free) group diminish in importance and fall behind the office of oldest. The new office is also open to younger and dependent groups.

Sociological Terminology for Kinship Groups

Before dealing with the units which are to be regarded as settlement groups, we shall compare the kinship groups of the Ekonda with the sociological ideal types. Keeping in mind the authors mentioned at the beginning, I shall now discuss the various terms used for groups which are applicable to conditions found among the Ekonda. [196]

Family

The small family is of no importance in the organizational system of the Ekonda. Nevertheless it is very important as the smallest unit of economic life. Each small family is potentially polygynous, but monogynous marriages are more numerous at the present time, especially among the younger generation. In view of this difference between potential and practiced polygyny, it seems advisable to follow Thurnwald in classing the polygynous forms together with the small family and to differentiate its nuclear families (18). In my opinion this approach

18. Vol. 4, p. 11 f.

seems to correspond more closely to its functional importance than Murdock's view, according to which the polygynous family